

for a year FCC rules about how many media outlets a company can own while the General Accounting Office investigates whether consolidation in the broadcast media is connected with indecency on the airwaves. It's awaiting action by the full Senate.

We're glad there is still lots of full-throated public reaction against sleaze in the media (even if the public is often fickle about what it considers inappropriate). The FCC is supposed to uphold some standards, which is why it monitors complaints and spells out the rules for what constitutes "exhibitionism," "obscenity" and "blasphemy." But the best pressure, we believe, is the voice of thousands of individual consumers making their views known to the companies that market the stuff.

We understand that few politicians, especially with an election nearing, are willing to risk being accused of "defending indecency." But Congress should tread lightly in such matters. A law broad enough to ensure that no one's ear or eye is offended will end up silencing speech—indignation at government policies, for example, expressed in strong language—that ought to enjoy full constitutional protection.

"It's a shame we have to address this issue," declared House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, "but when members of the broadcast industry violate the boundaries of reasonable tolerance, that's exactly what we're forced to do."

Forced? Panicked is more like it, and the spectacle is embarrassing.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "CALLING FOR 211 ACT OF 2005"

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be the lead Democratic sponsor of the Calling for 211 Act of 2005, and I look forward to working with my congressional partner Rep. BILIRAKIS to move this proposal forward.

Every hour of every day, someone in the United States needs essential services for themselves or someone close to them. These services can range from finding an after-school program for a child, to securing care for an aging parent, to finding drug or alcohol counseling. Faced with a myriad of agencies and help lines, many people end up going without services that they need just because they don't know where to start.

When someone calls 2-1-1, an information and referral specialist assesses the caller's needs and determines which service provider is best equipped to handle their problems or crises. These specialists are also trained to determine whether a caller may be eligible for other programs. 2-1-1 service providers maintain comprehensive databases of resources, including federal, state and local government agencies, community-based organizations and private non-profits.

In 2000, the FCC designated 2-1-1 for community information and referral purposes. Today, 2-1-1 reaches 107 million Americans—about 37 percent of the U.S. population—with call centers operational in 31 states and the District of Columbia. The goal of the Calling for 211 Act of 2005 is to ensure that all Americans have access to quality community information and referral services through 2-1-1.

The largest barriers for communities seeking to implement 2-1-1 are funding and awareness. In many states, limited resources have slowed the process of connecting communities with this vital service. Current funding where 2-1-1 is operational comes from diverse sources including non-profits, state governments, foundations, and businesses.

The Calling for 211 Act is strongly supported by the United Way and builds on the ongoing efforts to make it easier to connect people with important community services and volunteer opportunities through the nationwide implementation of 2-1-1. The legislation provides federal matching grants to enable some dramatic and much needed changes to the way people connect to their communities, including: Providing the infrastructure to connect individuals with precise information and social services that address their needs; Empowering the nation to better respond to large-scale emergencies and homeland security needs by relieving pressure on overwhelmed 911 call centers; Providing aggregated data from 2-1-1 systems nationwide to better assess the needs of our communities.

I believe the 2-1-1 system has great potential; this legislation will establish a federal partnership with states and local communities to give more Americans access to 2-1-1 services. By augmenting existing funding from state and local governments, nonprofits, and the business community, we can ensure that 2-1-1 can finally be a truly national system. A small investment at the national level would pay immediate dividends in terms of faster, more efficient responses to non-emergency but still critical situations.

In a crisis no one has time to flip through their phonebook. When an urgent medical or safety issue arises, we dial 911 knowing we can get help anywhere and at anytime. We should expect the same when it comes to tracking down important social services as well.

I urge my Colleagues to support this legislation and help to implement this critical safety net for all Americans.

BLACK HISTORY TRIBUTE TO HATTIE J. HITE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, throughout the month of February, I would like to recognize outstanding African Americans of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi, and their contribution to Black History. The 23 counties of the 2nd District are well represented from both a local and national perspective.

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month." In fact, black history had barely begun to be studied—or even documented—when the tradition originated. Although blacks have been in America as far back as colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that they gained a presence in our history books.

Though scarcely documented in history books, if at all, the crucial role African Americans have played in the development of our nation must not be overlooked.

I would like to recognize Mayersville's unsung hero, Mrs. Hattie J. Hite. Known as Ms. Hattie, Hite is 70 years old and the mother of one deceased daughter, Lillian Hite. She is very instrumental in the community and her church family. Every morning, Mr. & Mrs. Hite prepare and deliver breakfast to elderly citizens in the community.

She prepares meals for all of the church functions. Each May, she hosts a memorial program at church honoring her mother, sister and daughter. She invites family, friends, and community members to come over for breakfast. She is and has been a mother figure to the entire community.

I take great pride in recognizing and paying tribute to this outstanding African American of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi who deserves mention, not only in the month of February but year round.

REMEMBERING THE TRAGEDY OF KHOJALY

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, for years a number of distinguished Members of this House have come to the Floor of this Chamber every April to commemorate the so-called Armenian Genocide—the exact details of which are still very much under debate today almost 90 years after the events. Ironically and tragically, none of these Members has ever once mentioned the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Armenians during the Armenia-Azerbaijan war which ended a mere decade ago.

Khojaly was a little known small town in Azerbaijan until February 1992. Today it no longer exists, and for people of Azerbaijan and the region, the word "Khojaly" has become synonymous with pain, sorrow, and cruelty. On February 26, 1992, the world ended for the people of Khojaly when Armenian troops supported by a Russian infantry regiment did not just attack the town but they razed it to the ground. In the process the Armenians brutally murdered 613 people, annihilated whole families, captured 1275 people, left 1,000 civilians maimed or crippled, and another 150 people unaccounted for in their wake.

Memorial, a Russian human rights group, reported that "scores of the corpses bore traces of profanation. Doctors on a hospital train in Agdam noted no less than four corpses that had been scalped and one that had been beheaded. . . . and one case of live scalping."

Various other witnesses reported horrifying details of the massacre. The late Azerbaijani journalist Chingiz Mustafayev, who was the first to film the aftermath of the massacre, wrote an account of what he saw. He said, "Some children were found with severed ears; the skin had been cut from the left side of an elderly woman's face; and men had been scalped."

Human Rights Watch called the tragedy at the time "the largest massacre to date in the conflict."

The New York Times wrote about "truckloads of bodies" and described acts of "scalping."